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secret consisted in dividing the nerve, or, as I may say, slaying the messenger of evil: the consequence of which was, that the poor horse, no longer conscious of the malady in his hoof, leaned heavily upon it, and ultimately became incurably lamed for life.

So much as to our sensations of *pain*. But fortunately for us there is another class, and this comprising, according to some, a family very nearly if not altogether as numerous—I mean our sensations of the pleasurable kind. “Man,” saith the Scripture, “roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire.” This includes the comforts of a good dinner, and a cheerful fire-side on a winter’s evening, and most people will agree with me these are no bad things, especially with a group of happy smiling faces about us. The inlets to our agreeable perceptions are certainly not so numerous as those to the opposite kind, as we are approachable by pain from every part of the body without exception, but it is otherwise with our “notions of the agreeable.” However, they can reach us in tolerable abundance through the eye, the ear, the taste (including the smell), and the touch. It may be as well to record here, for the benefit of posterity—as with the rapid increase of railroads, and other improved modes of travelling and living in these days, it stands a chance of being forgotten hereafter—that to one who has been up all night in a close coach, “four inside,” or has dined at a Lord’s Mayor’s inauguration dinner, partaking largely of the good things, the warm bath is a highly agreeable and efficacious restorative, and that he is indebted in this case to the entire envelope of his epidermis, and not to any one part in particular, for the pleasing sensation he experiences. There are other modes of exciting the pleasurable on this wholesale plan, such as shampooing, as it is practised in the east, and suddenly plunging into the snow after stewing in vapour, as they do in Russia, and so on; but as I have never myself been “done” by any of these processes, I do not take upon me to recommend them. I am not an advocate for tickling. The laughter which it excites is one to which we give way with reluctance, and its pleasure is equivocal. I have seen poor children tickled nearly to death, and feel a great horror of that mode of making my exit from all the consciousness that belong to this mortal coil.

As to the innumerable sensations of agreeableness which we may receive through the eye, including all that may be seen—the ear encompassing all the concords of sweet sounds—the warbling of birds—the voice of the beloved, and all the melody of song—through the taste, with all its varieties—what gives to the peach its melting richness?—to generous wine its elevating gentlemanliness of flavour?—to meats, soups, and sauces, all their delicious gusto?—to the rose its sweetness?—to the cinnamon tree and the orange grove their spicy fragrance? Whence come all the delightful visions of the opium-eater? He lives whilst under the influence of the drug in a world of ecstasy: his soul teems with the most pleasing fancies; all around him is soft and soothing; whatever he sees or hears, ministers to delight.

If you have never lit your cigar as you sallied forth with dog and gun on a fine December morning, let me tell you, gentle reader, that you have missed a sensation worth getting up to enjoy. But not to lose ourselves in a wilderness of sweets, or to forget our great argument, what is the immediate cause of all these so agreeable effects? Why, a peculiar organization of our bodies, fitted to receive every imaginable impression from without, whether of the painful or the agreeable kind, and to transmit that impression, when received, to the seat of perception within.

We call it the nervous system; and what I would beg my readers to consider is, how wonderful, how curious, above all comprehension or explanation, that apparatus in our construction must be, to which we owe such an infinite variety of sensations, and those of the most opposite kinds! It baffles the skill of the anatomist to unveil its mysteries: no needle can trace its ligaments; yet it is a real, substantial thing, of whose existence we have perfect assurance by the very palpable effects which it produces.

Thus much for our different and various sensations arising from outward impressions; but there is yet a third class, in which, by a sort of reflection, our nerves perform an important function, and transmit the action begun in the *mind* to the *seat of emotion*, or the soul. Hence the joy of the mathematician at the discovery of some important problem, or of the poet at hitting upon some long-sought-for rhyme with an-

swering metre. In such cases the mind, or pure intellect, *originates*, and the body “takes the signal” from it. There is a reciprocity between them, and it is well when, like some loving couples, they dwell on good terms together. When, happily, this is the case, there is much peace “at home:” the senses do not seek for gratifications which the mind disapproves, and the mind does not apply to them for pleasures which are forbidden.

However, I shall not enter upon this further disquisition—highly interesting though it be—at present, but shall reserve it in order that we may resume it with due deliberation, and do it that justice which it so well deserves, at another opportunity.

IRISH SUPERSTITIONS—GHOSTS AND FAIRIES. THE RIVAL KEMPERS.

BY WILLIAM CARLETON.

(Second Article.)

IN a former paper we gave an authentic account of what the country folks, and we ourselves at the time, looked upon as a genuine instance of apparition. It appeared to the simple-minded to be a clear and distinct case, exhibiting all those minute and subordinate details which, by an arrangement naturally happy and without concert, go to the formation of truth. There was, however, but one drawback in the matter, and that was the ludicrous and inadequate nature of the moral motive; for what unsteady and derogatory notions of Providence must we not entertain when we see the order and purposes of his divine will so completely degraded and travestied by the fact of a human soul returning to this earth again for the ridiculous object of settling the claim to a pair of breeches!

When we see the succession to crowns and kingdoms, and the inheritance to large territorial property and great personal rank, all left so completely undecided that ruin and desolation have come upon nations and families in attempting their adjustment, and when we see a laughable dispute about a pair of breeches settled by a personal revelation from another life, we cannot help asking why the supernatural intimation was permitted in the one case and not in the other, especially when their relative importance differed so essentially? To follow up this question, however, by insisting upon a principle so absurd, would place Providence in a position so perfectly unreasonable and capricious, that we do not wish to press the inference so far as admission of divine interference in such a manner would justify us in doing.

Having detailed the case of Daly’s daughter, however, we take our leave of the girl and the ghost, and turn now to another case which came under our own observation in connection with Frank Martin and the fairies. Before commencing, however, we shall by way of introduction endeavour to give our readers a few short particulars as to fairies, their origin, character, and conduct. And as we happen to be on this subject, we cannot avoid regretting that we have not by us copies of two most valuable works upon it from the pen of our learned and admirable countryman, Thomas Keightley—we allude to his *Fairy Mythology* and his *History of the Transmission of Popular Fictions*; two works which cannot be perused without delight at the happy manner in which so much learning and amusement, so much solid information, and all that is agreeable in extensive research, are inimitably combined. We are sorry, we repeat, that we have them not by us; but we trust that we may on some early occasion be allowed to notice them at greater length, and to give them a more formal recommendation to our countrymen.

With the etymology of the word fairy we do not intend in a publication like this to puzzle our readers. It is with the tradition connected with the *thing* that we have to do, and not with a variety of learned speculations, which appear after all to be yet unsettled. The general opinion, in Ireland at least, is, that during the war of Lucifer in heaven the angels were divided into three classes. The first class consisted of those faithful spirits who at once and without hesitation adhered to the standard of the Omnipotent; the next consisted of those who openly rebelled and followed the great apostate, sharing eternal perdition along with him; the third and last consisted of those who, during the mighty clash and uproar of the contending hosts, stood timidly aloof and refused to join either power. These, says the tradition, were hurled out of heaven, some upon earth and some into the waters of the earth, where they are to remain ignorant of their fate until

the day of judgment. They know their own power, however, and it is said that nothing but their hopes of salvation prevent them from at once annihilating the whole human race. Such is the broad basis of the general superstition; but our traditional history and conception of the popular fairy falls far short of the historical dignity associated with its origin. The fairy of the people is a diminutive creature, generally dressed in green, irritable, capricious, and quite unsteady in all its principles and dealings with mankind. Sometimes it exhibits singular proofs of ingenuity, but, on the contrary, is frequently overreached by mere mortal capacity. It is impossible to say in dealing with it whether its conduct will be found benevolent or otherwise, for it often has happened that its threats of injury have ended in kindness, and its promises of protection terminated in malice and treachery. What is very remarkable too is, that it by no means appears to be a mere spirit, but a being with passions, appetites, and other natural wants like ourselves. Indeed, the society or community of fairies appears to be less self-dependent than ours, inasmuch as there are several offices among them which they not only cannot perform, but which render it necessary that we should be stolen and domiciled with them, for the express purpose of performing for them. Like us they are married and given in marriage, and rear families; but whether their offspring are subject to death, is a matter not exactly of the clearest. Some traditions affirm that they are, and others that they are as immortal as the angels, although possessing material bodies analogous to our own. The fairy, in fact, is supposed to be a singular mixture of good and evil, not very moral in its actions or objects, often very thievish, and sometimes benevolent when kindness is least expected from it. It is generally supposed by the people that this singular class of fictitious creatures enjoy as a kind of right the richest and best of all the fruits of the earth, and that the top grain of wheat, oats, &c., and the ripest apple, pear, &c., all belong to them, and are taken as their own exclusive property.

They have also other acknowledged rights which they never suffer to be violated with impunity. For instance, wherever a meal is eaten upon the grass in an open field, and the crumbs are not shaken down upon the spot for their use, there they are sure to leave one of their curses called the *far gurtha*, or the hungry man: for whoever passes over that particular spot for ever afterwards is liable to be struck down with weakness and hunger; and unless he can taste a morsel of bread, he neither will nor can recover. The weakness in this instance, however, is not natural, for if the person affected but tastes as much meal or flour as would lie on the point of a penknife, he will instantaneously break the spell of the fairies, and recover his former strength. Such spots are said to be generally known by their superior verdure: they are always round, and the diameter of these little circles is seldom more than a single step. The grass which grows upon them is called in the north and parts of the north-west *hungry-grass*, and is accounted for as we have already stated. Indeed, the walks and haunts of the fairies are to be considered as very sacred and inviolate. For instance, it is dangerous to throw out dirty water after dusk or before sunrise, lest in doing so you bespatter them with a liquid as unsavoury to the smell as it is unclean to the touch: for these little gentry are peculiarly fond of cleanliness and neatness, both in dress and person. Bishop Andrews's Lamentation for the Fairies gives as humorous and correct a notion of their personal habits in this way, and their disposition to reward cleanliness in servants, as could be written.

We shall ourselves relate a short anecdote or two touching them, before we come to Frank Martin's case; premising to our readers that we could if we wished fill a volume—ay, three of them—with anecdotes and legends connected with our irritable but good-humoured little friends.

Paddy Corcoran's wife was for several years afflicted with a kind of complaint which nobody could properly understand. She was sick, and she was not sick; she was well, and she was not well; she was as ladies wish to be who love their lords, and she was not as such ladies wish to be. In fact, nobody could tell what the matter with her was. She had a gnawing at the heart which came heavily upon her husband; for, with the help of God, a keener appetite than the same gnawing amounted to could not be met with of a summer's day. The poor woman was delicate beyond belief, and had no appetite at all, so she hadn't, barring a little relish for a mutton-chop, or a "staik," or a bit o' mait, anyway; for sure, God help her! she hadn't the laist inclination for the dhry pratie, or the dhrop

o' sour buttermilk along wid it, especially as she was so poorly: and indeed for a woman in her condition—for, sick as she was, poor Paddy always was made to believe her in *that* condition—but God's will be done! she didn't care. A pratie an' a grain o' salt was as welcome to her—glory be to his name!—as the best roast an' boiled that ever was dressed; an' why not? There was one comfort: she wouldn't be long wid him—long throublin' him; it matthered little what she got; but sure she knew herself that from the gnawin' at her heart, she could never do good widout the little bit o' mait now and then; an', sure, if her own husband begridged it to her, who else had she a better right to expect it from?

Well, as we said, she lay a bedridden invalid for long enough, trying doctors and quacks of all sorts, sexes, and sizes, and all without a farthing's benefit, until at the long run poor Paddy was nearly brought to the last pass in striving to keep her in "the bit o' mait." The seventh year was now on the point of closing, when one harvest day, as she lay bemoaning her hard condition on her bed beyond the kitchen fire, a little weeshy woman, dressed in a neat red cloak, comes in, and, sitting down by the hearth, says,

"Well, Kitty Corcoran, you've had a long lair of it there on the broad o' yer back for seven years, an' you're jist as far from bein' cured as ever."

"Mavrone, ay," said the other; "in troth that's what I was this minnit thinkin' ov, and a sorrowful thought it is to me."

"It's yer own fau't, thin," says the little woman; "an' indeed for that matter, it's yer fau't that ever you wor there at all."

"Arra, how is that?" asked Kitty; "sure I wouldn't be here if I could help it? Do you think it's a comfort or a pleasure to me to be sick and bedridden?"

"No," said the other, "I do not; but I'll tell you the truth: for the last seven years you have been annoyin' us. I am one o' the good people; an' as I have a regard for you, I'm come to let you know the reason why you've been sick so long as you are. For all the time you've been ill, if you'll take the thrubble to remimber, you've thrown out yer dirty wather after dusk an' before sunrise, at the very time we're passin' yer door, which we pass twice a-day. Now, if you avoid this, if you throw it out in a different place, an' at a different time, the complaint you have will lave you: so will the gnawin' at the heart; an' you'll be as well as ever you wor. If you don't follow this advice, why, remain as you are, an' all the art o' man can't cure you." She then bade her good-bye, and disappeared.

Kitty, who was glad to be cured on such easy terms, immediately complied with the injunction of the fairy; and the consequence was, that the next day she found herself in as good health as ever she enjoyed during her life.

Lanty McClusky had married a wife, and of course it was necessary to hire a house in which to keep her. Now, Lanty had taken a bit of a farm, about six acres; but as there was no house on it, he resolved to build one; and that it might be as comfortable as possible, he selected for the site of it one of those beautiful green circles that are supposed to be the playground of the fairies. Lanty was warned against this; but as he was a headstrong man, and not much given to fear, he said he would not change such a pleasant situation for his house to oblige all the fairies in Europe. He accordingly proceeded with the building, which he finished off very neatly; and as it is usual on these occasions to give one's neighbours and friends a house-warming, so, in compliance with this good and pleasant old custom, Lanty having brought home the wife in the course of the day, got a fiddler, and gave those who had come to see him a dance in the evening. This was all very well, and the fun and hilarity were proceeding briskly, when a noise was heard after night had set in, like a crushing and straining of ribs and rafters on the top of the house. The folks assembled all listened, and without doubt there was nothing heard but crushing, and heaving, and pushing, and groaning, and panting, as if a thousand little men were engaged in pulling down the roof.

"Come," said a voice, which spoke in a tone of command, "work hard: you know we must have Lanty's house down before midnight."

This was an unwelcome piece of intelligence to Lanty, who, finding that his enemies were such as he could not cope with, walked out, and addressed them as follows:—

"Gintlemen, I humbly ax yer pardon for buildin' on any place belongin' to you; but if you'll have the civiltude to let

me alone this night, I'll begin to pull down and remove the house to-morrow morning."

This was followed by a noise like the clapping of a thousand tiny little hands, and a shout of "Bravo, Lanty! build half way between the two Whitethorns above the borean;" and after another hearty little shout of exultation, there was a brisk rushing noise, and they were heard no more.

The story, however, does not end here; for Lanty, when digging the foundation of his new house, found the full of a *ham of gold*: so that in leaving the fairies to their play-ground, he became a richer man than ever he otherwise would have been, had he never come in contact with them at all.

There is another instance of their interference mentioned, in which it is difficult to say whether their simplicity or benevolence is the most amusing. In the north of Ireland there are spinning meetings of unmarried females frequently held at the houses of farmers, called *kemps*. Every young woman who has got the reputation of being a quick and expert spinner, attends where the kemp is to be held, at an hour usually before daylight, and on these occasions she is accompanied by her sweetheart or some male relative, who carries her wheel, and conducts her safely across the fields or along the road as the case may be. A kemp is indeed an animated and joyous scene, and one, besides, which is calculated to promote industry and decent pride. Scarcely any thing can be more cheering and agreeable than to hear at a distance, breaking the silence of morning, the light-hearted voices of many girls either in mirth or song, the humming sound of the busy wheels—jarred upon a little, it is true, by the stridulous noise and checkings of the reels, and the voices of the reelers, as they call aloud the cheeks, together with the name of the girl and the quantity she has spun up to that period; for the contest is generally commenced two or three hours before daybreak. This mirthful spirit is also sustained by the prospect of a dance—with which, by the way, every kemp closes; and when the fair victor is declared, she is to be looked upon as the queen of the meeting, and treated with the necessary respect.

But to our tale. Every one knew Shaun Buie M'Gaveran to be the cleanest, best-conducted boy, and the most industrious too, in the whole parish of Faugh-a-balla. Hard was it to find a young fellow who could handle a flail, spade, or reaping-hook, in better style, or who could go through his day's work in a more creditable or workmanlike manner. In addition to this he was a fine, well-built, handsome young man as you could meet in a fair; and so sign was on it, maybe the pretty girls weren't likely to pull each other's caps about him. Shaun, however, was as prudent as he was good-looking; and although he wanted a wife, yet the sorrow one of him but preferred taking a well-handed, smart girl, who was known to be well behaved and industrious like himself. Here, however, was where the puzzle lay on him, for instead of one girl of that kind, there were in the neighbourhood no less than a dozen of them—all equally fit and willing to become his wife, and all equally good-looking. There were two, however, whom he thought a trifle above the rest; but so nicely balanced were Biddy Corrigan and Sally Gorman, that for the life of him he could not make up his mind to decide between them. Each of them had won her kemp; and it was currently said by them who ought to know, that neither of them could overmatch the other. No two girls in the parish were better respected, nor more deserved to be so; and the consequence was, they had every one's good word and good wish. Now, it so happened that Shaun had been pulling a cord with each; and as he knew not how to decide between, he thought he would allow them to do that themselves if they could. He accordingly gave out to the neighbours that he would hold a kemp on that day week, and he told Biddy and Sally especially that he had made up his mind to marry whichever of them won the kemp, for he knew right well, as did all the parish, that one of them must. The girls agreed to this very good-humouredly—Biddy telling Sally, that she (Sally) would surely win it; and Sally, not to be outdone in civility, telling the same thing to her.

Well, the week was nearly past, there being but two days till that of the kemp, when, about three o'clock, there walks into the house of old Paddy Corrigan, a little woman dressed in high-heeled shoes and a short red cloak. There was no one in the house but Biddy at the time, who rose up and placed a chair near the fire, and asked the little red woman to sit down and rest herself. She accordingly did so, and in a short time a lively chat commenced between them.

"So," said the strange woman, "there's to be a great kemp in Shaun Buie M'Gaveran's?"

"Indeed there is that, good woman," replied Biddy, smiling a little, and blushing to the back of that again, because she knew her own fate depended on it.

"And," continued the little woman, "whoever wins the kemp, wins a husband?"

"Ay, so it seems."

"Well, whoever gets Shaun will be a happy woman, for he's the moral of a good boy."

"That's nothing but the truth, any how," replied Biddy, sighing for fear, you may be sure, that she herself might lose him; and indeed a young woman might sigh from many a worse reason. "But," said she, changing the subject, "you appear to be tired, honest woman, an' I think you had better eat a bit, an' take a good drink of *buinnhe ramuher* (thick milk) to help you on your journey."

"Thank you kindly, a colleen," said the woman; "I'll take a bit, if you please, hopin' at the same time that you won't be the poorer of it this day twelve months."

"Sure," said the girl, "you know that what we give from kindness, ever and always leaves a blessing behind it."

"Yes, acushla, when it is given from kindness."

She accordingly helped herself to the food that Biddy placed before her, and appeared after eating to be very much refreshed.

"Now," said she, rising up, "you're a very good girl, an' if you are able to find out my name before Tuesday morning, the kemp-day, I tell you that you'll win it, and gain the husband."

"Why," said Biddy, "I never saw you before. I don't know who you are, nor where you live; how then can I ever find out your name?"

"You never saw me before, sure enough," said the old woman, "an' I tell you that you will never see me again but once; an' yet if you have not my name for me at the close of the kemp, you'll lose all, an' that will leave you a sore heart, for well I know you love Shaun Buie."

So saying, she went away, and left poor Biddy quite cast down at what she had said, for, to tell the truth, she loved Shaun very much, and had no hopes of being able to find out the name of the little woman, on which it appeared so much to her depended.

It was very near the same hour of the same day that Sally Gorman was sitting alone in her father's house, thinking of the kemp, when who should walk into her but our friend the little red woman?

"God save you, honest woman," said Sally; "this is a fine day that's in it, the Lord be praised!"

"It is," said the woman, "as fine a day as one could wish for; indeed it is."

"Have you no news on your travels?" asked Sally.

"The only news in the neighbourhood," replied the other, "is this great kemp that's to take place at Shaun Buie M'Gaveran's. They say you're either to win him or lose him then," she added, looking closely at Sally as she spoke.

"I'm not very much afraid of that," said Sally with confidence; "but even if I do lose him, I may get as good."

"It's not easy gettin' as good," rejoined the old woman, "an' you ought to be very glad to win him if you can."

"Let me alone for that," said Sally. "Biddy's a good girl, I allow; but as for spinnin', she never saw the day she could leave me behind her. Won't you sit an' rest you?" she added; "you're maybe tired."

"It's time for you to think of it," thought the woman, but she spoke nothing; "but," she added to herself on reflection, "it's better late than never—I'll sit awhile, till I see a little closer what she's made of."

She accordingly sat down and chatted upon several subjects, such as young women like to talk about, for about half an hour; after which she arose, and taking her little staff in hand, she bade Sally good-bye and went her way. After passing a little from the house she looked back, and could not help speaking to herself as follows:—

"She's smooth and smart,
But she wants the heart;
She's tight and neat,
But she gave no meat."

Poor Biddy now made all possible inquiries about the old woman, but to no purpose. Not a soul she spoke to about her had ever seen or heard of such a woman. She felt very dispirited and began to lose heart, for there is no doubt that if she missed Shaun, it would have cost her many a sorrowful

day. She knew she would never get his equal, or at least any one that she loved so well. At last the kemp day came, and with it all the pretty girls of the neighbourhood, to Shaun Buie's. Among the rest, the two that were to decide their right to him were doubtless the handsomest pair by far, and every one admired them. To be sure, it was a blythe and merry place, and many a light laugh and sweet song rang out from pretty lips that day. Biddy and Sally, as every one expected, were far ahead of the rest, but so even in their spinning that the reelers could not for the life of them declare which was the best. It was neck and neck and head and head between the pretty creatures, and all who were at the kemp felt themselves wound up to the highest pitch of interest and curiosity to know which of them would be successful.

The day was now more than half gone, and no difference was between them, when, to the surprise and sorrow of every one present, Biddy Corrigan's *heck* broke in two, and so to all appearance ended the contest in favour of her rival; and what added to her mortification, she was as ignorant of the red little woman's name as ever. What was to be done? All that could be done was done. Her brother, a boy of about fourteen years of age, happened to be present when the accident took place, having been sent by his father and mother to bring them word how the match went on between the rival spinsters. Johnny Corrigan was accordingly dispatched with all speed to Donnel M'Cusker's, the wheelwright, in order to get the heck mended, that being Biddy's last but hopeless chance. Johnny's anxiety that his sister should win was of course very great, and in order to lose as little time as possible he struck across the country, passing through, or rather close by, Kilrudden forth, a place celebrated as a resort of the fairies. What was his astonishment, however, as he passed a whitethorn tree, to hear a female voice singing, in accompaniment to the sound of a spinning-wheel, the following words:

"There's a girl in this town doesn't know my name;
But my name's Even Trot—Even Trot."

"There's a girl in this town," said the lad, "who's in great distress, for she has broken her heck and lost a husband. I'm now goin' to Donnel M'Cusker's to get it mended."

"What's her name?" said the little red woman.

"Biddy Corrigan."

The little woman immediately whipped out the heck from her own wheel, and giving it to the boy, desired him to bring it to his sister, and never mind Donnel M'Cusker.

"You have little time to lose," she added, "so go back and give her this; but don't tell her how you got it, nor, above all things, that it was Even Trot that gave it to you."

The lad returned, and after giving the heck to his sister, as a matter of course told her that it was a little red woman called Even Trot that sent it to her, a circumstance which made the tears of delight start to Biddy's eyes, for she knew now that Even Trot was the name of the old woman, and having known that, she felt that something good would happen to her. She now resumed her spinning, and never did human fingers let down the thread so rapidly. The whole kemp were amazed at the quantity which from time to time filled her pirn. The hearts of her friends began to rise, and those of Sally's party to sink, as hour after hour she was fast approaching her rival, who now spun if possible with double speed on finding Biddy coming up with her. At length they were again even, and just at that moment in came her friend the little red woman, and asks aloud, "is there any one in this kemp that knows my name?" This question she asked three times before Biddy could pluck up courage to answer her. She at last said,

"There's a girl in this town *does* know your name—
Your name is Even Trot—Even Trot."

"Ay," said the old woman, "and so it is; and let that name be your guide and your husband's through life. Go steadily along, but let your step be even; stop little; keep always advancing; and you'll never have cause to rue the day that you first saw Even Trot."

We need scarcely add that Biddy won the kemp and the husband, and that she and Shaun lived long and happily together; and I have only now to wish, kind reader, that you and I may live longer and more happily still.

Men no more desire another's secrets, to conceal them, than they would another's purse, for the pleasure only of carrying it.—*Fielding*.

WHAT ARE COMFORTS?

BY MARTIN DOYLE.

A FEW months ago I had the honour of passing a day in England with a gentleman of considerable property, who took the trouble of showing me a very extensive park and tillage farm near his manor-house, around which every thing indicated good taste and abundant wealth in the possessor.

It has rarely been my good fortune to view more beautiful scenery than that which the demesne of F—— possesses within itself, or a place in which it would be more difficult to find a want, either in the nature or extent of the landscape: yet as we walked along, and were admiring some undulating land, about six miles distant, Mr F—— suddenly stopped, and remarked "that he had long wished for that hill, in order to plant on it a clump or two of trees, as a picturesque termination to his prospect: it would be such a comfort to have it! I have offered forty years' purchase for that land," said he; "but the possessor is an obstinate fellow, and won't part with it."

I ventured to suggest that he should endeavour to prevail upon the owner of the hill to plant the desired clumps; but to this he gave a decided negative, saying, that it would be very uncomfortable indeed to be indebted to such an unaccommodating person for any thing.

At dinner, the lady of the house, after asking me if I had been pleased with Mr F——'s farming, and proposing some other questions of that nature, which she considerably accommodated to my capacity, in order to relieve me if possible from the embarrassment natural to a man of my station in life when sitting at table with his betters, and surrounded with luxuries quite new to him, inquired with great suavity of manner if I did not think that the owner of the hill property was very "tiresome" in refusing Mr F—— the little comfort on which his heart was fixed; and in the course of the dessert informed me that the governess was a very "comfortable" person to have about children: that the King of the French had no "comfort" in his ministers, and must find the attempts upon his life very "tiresome" indeed.

Having got over the dinner business, during which I had been really uncomfortable from the dread of doing something very awkward, I became composed and familiar by degrees, and asked questions in my turn; and was assured that there is very little comfort to be had in a mere country life without a first-rate bailiff and gardener, newspapers, new publications, a billiard table, and society of a certain class within visiting distance; that hot baths are indispensable comforts within the house, and that one adjoining the stables is also a great comfort to a hunter after a hard day's work.

It was also among their comforts to have the nursery in a remote wing, where the cry of a child could not reach the seniors of the family in their apartments, and a very great comfort to have a pew in the church with a fireplace in it.

My host, who would not allow me to leave Castle F—— that night, passed much of the evening in reading the papers of that day, standing at intervals with his back to the fire, which comfort he seemed to enjoy extremely, while I threw in a word now and then to him or his lady, to whom I detailed the receipt for making catsup from nettles, as it appears in my *Cyclopædia of Agriculture*. "This economical method of making catsup," she was pleased to say, "would be a great comfort to the poor;" and so it would, as I ventured to observe, if they had any thing to eat that required such sauce.

I was conducted at night to a bedroom, with large mirrors, a pair of wax candles on the dressing-table, a luxurious chair placed opposite the fire, and an immensely high bedstead, curtained with damask satin. Being subject to the nightmare, I mounted this (by a step-ladder) with fear and trembling, lest I should roll out in the night; and the apprehension of this calamity in a strange house, and among great people, kept me from sleeping all night, and rendered me extremely uncomfortable.

I could not help thinking what Mrs Doyle and the children would say if they saw me tucked under such fine bed-clothes, and stretched under such a grand canopy; and to tell the truth, I wished myself safely out of it, and in my own crib at Ballyorley. Yet to the obliging inquiries of my entertainers, on the ensuing morning, "if my bed had been comfortable?" I was unable to say No. But what *are* comforts? thought I to myself all the time. Indeed, the consideration of this question has occupied my mind a good deal since, for I find the notions attached to the term "comfort" are infinitely varied.